

Braille Monitor



FEBRUARY, 1984

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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* * *

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THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND IS NOT AN ORGANIZATION
SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES

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IN MEMORIAM HAROLD REAGAN

by Kenneth Jernigan

On December 20, 1983, Harold Reagan died. His death followed a brief illness at home and only a few hours in the hospital. Apparently there was a blockage of the colon and cancer. At the time of his death Harold was 73.

These are the bare facts, but they do little to tell the story of Harold Reagan. He was one of the most devoted and steadfast members the Federation has ever had, and to me he was a dear friend for more than thirty years.

Harold attended his first national convention in 1947 in Denver. From then until his death he missed (so far as I can determine) only two, both because of death or illness in his immediate family. He came into the movement at a time when the organization was much smaller and less complex than it is today but at a time when the needs were no less compelling and the demands no less strenuous.

After Harold returned home from that first national convention in 1947 (a meeting, incidentally, which he said he attended largely out of curiosity) he was determined that the blind of Kentucky should play their part in building the movement and making life better not only for the blind of their own state but of the nation. He was largely responsible for organizing the Kentucky affiliate and served as its first President.

I first met Harold at the Nashville

convention in 1952, and we were immediately drawn to each other. He was a quiet man, rarely making speeches on the floor, but he was one of the most determined people I have ever known. He was absolutely unshakable in his beliefs and loyalties and in his dedication to the movement. During the civil war which fragmented the Federation in the late 1950's Harold was an unfailing source of strength. No compromise for him. He knew what was right, and he thought we should do it. He could see no reason for maneuvering or lengthy argument. Right was right, and principle was principle. One might compromise on details or non-essentials, but not on principle. Many were the meetings and the conferences on strategy which we held before the dissension was settled and the movement was launched into its new cycle of growth and expansion. Harold was there through it all, and he never wavered.

He also refused to bow to pressure on other fronts. He worked as a vendor and was sometimes subject to pressure from the state agency because of his Federation convictions and activities. As it was in the Federation so it was in the vending program. He was soft spoken and reasonable but did not compromise his principles. Others who had far more opportunity and advantages showed far less commitment. Until the day of his death Harold always spoke with pride

concerning the growth of our movement. Fewer than two hundred people attended that Denver convention in 1947. More than ten times that number were at the 1983 convention in Kansas City—which, of course, was the last Harold attended.

Harold Reagan was my friend, my colleague, and my fellow worker in the organized blind movement. He was part of the first generation of the Federation. That generation built well its blueprints for action, its goals and objectives, and its hopes and dreams for the future still constitute the core of our being and point the way on the road of progress. Most of the first generation is now gone. So, too, are many of the second. The third generation is now in the fullness of its strength and purpose—and the beginnings of the fourth generation are commencing to take shape.

In 1984 (almost forty years after Harold Reagan attended his first national convention) the world is a different

place. In the interim we have had setbacks and progress, defeats and victories, sorrow and triumph—but above all, we have had a constantly improving climate for the blind of the nation. We have established our identity and built the strongest force ever to exist in the affairs of the blind. And Harold Reagan participated in it all—as a national board member, as a national officer, as a state leader, and as a rank and file member of the movement.

Harold, old friend, rest in peace. The organization which you did so much to build and which you loved so deeply is in good health. There are hundreds and thousands of vigorous Federationists who believe in the cause and who will do what has to be done. There are many of us who knew you personally and well. We will not forget, and we will keep your memory ever fresh in our hearts as we work to complete the dream and finish the task.

SHELTERED WORKSHOPS: WE'RE ONE STEP CLOSER TO REFORM

by James Gashel

Early in 1983, we asked Representative Barney Frank, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Manpower and Housing, Committee on Government Operations in the U.S. House of Representatives, to hold hearings on administrative and legal issues surrounding sheltered workshops. We told him candidly that we hoped this would lead to reforms.

The federal government has a big say about what goes on in the workshops.

Several laws apply, most notably the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act. Each has provisions specifically tailored to workshops. But, other laws, such as the National Labor Relations Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act, also apply to workshops as they do to other similar industries.

Our request for hearings sought a Congressional probe of the Javits-Wagner-

O'Day Program, with attention also to be paid to the Department of Labor's failure to enforce pay standards in the workshops. Chairman Frank was very interested. The hearings, entitled "The Administration of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act," occurred on May 17 and 18, 1983. In the Braille Monitor for August-September, 1983, we reprinted portions of testimony and questioning.

On November 15, 1983, the Committee on Government Operations took the first official action in response to the Subcommittee's hearings. House Report 98-546 is the result. The report (which was sent to House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill and ordered to be printed) contains findings, conclusions, and recommendations. On balance, it confirms and verifies virtually everything we have been saying about the sheltered workshops. It says they fail to hire blind people in management positions; that rates of pay are not properly monitored or enforced in accordance with the law; that National Industries for the Blind (NIB) is not held accountable for its spending policies; and that NIB has misused program funds in a campaign of resistance against labor unions. In these and other specifics, the report is a reform agenda for the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program. Now for some more details:

Government in the Sunshine Act: Several years ago, Congress passed the "Government in the Sunshine Act" to give interested organizations and the public a greater opportunity to oversee and react to the making of federal policy. During the May hearings, we said that the administering agencies for the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program do not comply with the spirit or the letter of

this law. The administering agencies are the Committee for Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Handicapped (CPBOSH), National Industries for the Blind (NIB), and National Industries for the Severely Handicapped (NISH). The first of these is clearly a government agency and as such is required to comply with the Government in the Sunshine Act. The exact legal status of NIB and NISH might technically make their obligation less certain. If so, this is a weakness in the current law.

The Committee report notes as follows: "The programs operated under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (JWOD) have been administered by procedures at variance with the Sunshine Act. Recently, during hearings of the investigating Subcommittee, the Committee for Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Handicapped (CPBOSH) announced that its meetings would now conform to the spirit of the Sunshine law. However, the investigating Subcommittee feels that open meetings should not only be a procedure of practice, but as prescribed by the Sunshine Act, should become the formally adopted policy of the CPBOSH." Then, with respect to the other agencies—NIB and NISH (referred to collectively as "central nonprofit agencies" or "CNAs")—the report states: "Both NIB and NISH are somewhat weak on provisions, as a matter of policy, for public access to some general scheduled meetings. While participation in CNA Board deliberations is more important to workshops, this should not preclude the public from its right to hear the issues being considered."

The language of those findings is admittedly not harsh or dictatorial. But, no one can surely doubt what the Subcom-

mittee expects for the future. To say that the program has been administered in the past with procedures "at variance with the Sunshine Act" is a very nice way of explaining that someone has probably violated the law. But wait, there's more to come.

Upward Mobility: Quoting from the report: "It was found that provisions and assurances of upward mobility were weak or non-existent as a matter of policy in the sheltered workshops participating in the program and among the technical assistance agencies. Although there were promotions to higher pay direct labor positions for blind and handicapped direct laborers, there are no clear rules, guidelines, or procedures that assure this to be policy. Since the program is intended to benefit blind and handicapped workers, there should be some procedural guidelines on substitution of non-blind or non-handicapped workers that fill capacities which might otherwise be held by capable intended beneficiaries."

"Similarly, the investigating Subcommittee found no formal provision or policies specifically for the advancement of blind and handicapped individuals into management and other non-direct labor positions. Although there are some blind and handicapped individuals sprinkled in non-direct labor capacities throughout the program (including the CNA's and supporting organizations), the program (especially workshops) remains vulnerable to charges of token representation of intended beneficiaries in non-direct labor capacities. The Committee (CPBOSH) has not taken a sufficient role on this issue, and makes inadequate provisions for monitoring upward mobility. This oversight should be

addressed and remedied."

Those findings are expressed in somewhat stronger language. But with respect to this item, the Subcommittee could not state that any of the agencies or workshops had broken the law, because the law does not require upward mobility. We have said that all elements in the program should be required to hire blind people in management, supervisory, and other nondirect labor jobs. The Subcommittee on Manpower and Housing apparently agrees and is now on record as telling the agencies to "get with it." But, will they? Most unlikely.

Accountability: We have said that NIB and NISH are given virtually a blank check to write their own policies and spend their federal revenues in any manner they choose. They have responded that they are watched by the Committee for Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Handicapped, as well as by their own boards of directors. This, they say, assures public accountability for their actions. Nonsense!

The report confirms the problem. It says: "The Committee (CPBOSH) has failed to adequately monitor the activities and expenditures of the CNA's in the past . . .

"There are no provisions for limitations or parameters on legitimate activities for which the CNA's can spend money generated directly or indirectly by the federal program. There is an absence of general guidelines on what are legitimate technical assistance, advisory, and support roles of the CNA's. Without such direction, it is impossible for auditors to determine what are permissible and impermissible CNA activities. While the investigating Subcommittee finds the CNA undertakings to

generally be laudable, and free of fraud and abuse that is no protection against potential abuse or extraneous (although worthwhile) projects. Under current conditions virtually anything the CNA's choose to undertake is legitimate."

This finding is exactly what we charged. No oversight, no accountability. Under the circumstances (and the report confirms this), it would be hard to find NIB or NISH guilty of fraud or misuse of the funds, short of outright stealing of the money. There is no evidence that they have done this. But, on the other hand, there is no evidence that they have not. It is simply impossible, as the report states, for auditors to determine what are "permissible and impermissible CNA activities." No check, no balance, and no accountability.

NIB Misconduct: While the report notes, as already mentioned, that the CNAs can write their own agendas, given the absence of reporting and accountability requirements or guidelines, there is one area of misconduct by NIB to which the Subcommittee called special attention. This is the use of attorneys to fight labor unions.

The report states: "An example of an activity the investigating Subcommittee regards as impermissible is participation (directly or indirectly) in the litigation of a labor-management dispute. The participation of NIB in litigation against the right of blind workshop employees to unionize should not be an activity undertaken by any entity created, empowered, or authorized by the JWOD Act. Although there are benefits in retaining counsel for advising those served under the program of existing law, it is quite a different matter to

support the position of one litigant over another (especially when both litigating parties are a part of the program)."

In a later section of the report, this theme is re-emphasized as follows: "The CNAs nor any other entity under the JWOD program should not be permitted to lobby, endorse, support, or otherwise be party to the support of any litigation in a labor-management dispute. Specifically, CNAs should be prohibited from retaining counsel for support of any view in such a dispute. The Committee strongly disapproves of interference by NIB in the Cincinnati, Ohio blind workshop dispute over the right of employees to unionize. Retention of legal counsel by the CNAs for program related questions or to promote the mandate of the program should be the most expansive interpretation of the application of such legal counsel."

But, that is not the end. The Subcommittee could not resist a parting shot on this same point, found in a later section of the report. That section describes NIB involvement in labor disputes as a "major exception" to wise and prudent use of program funds and labels it a "classic example of what is wrong with the current process wherein the Committee's oversight is lax or non-existent." We agree. Then, as a kind of windup to it all the report lays down the guidelines: "Had NIB retained counsel for the purpose of advising all JWOD program interests on the law and legal recourse directly or indirectly related to program goals, retention of counsel would be permissible. But expenditure of funds directly generated by this Federal program in support of one side against the other constitutes a grave

transgression of proper administrative judgment."

So says the Committee. This is the official response to NIB's claim of neutrality. We discussed that claim in the August-September Monitor. NIB said it had merely told the National Labor Relations Board and the federal court that blind people in the workshops are "clients," not "employees." But NIB spent \$50,000 to make this point and how much more, who can tell? Furthermore, the argument was designed intentionally to block labor organizing in the workshops, not (as NIB claimed) a matter of technical advice. So much for the claim of neutrality. Now we have it on the record, NIB has engaged in activities which are "impermissible" and constitute "a grave transgression of proper administrative judgment."

NIB's Commissions: Aside from a small direct appropriation from the Congress which goes to meet the salaries and expenses of the Committee for Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Handicapped, funding for the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program is through an indirect form of payment called a commission fee. The commission is part of the price which government agencies pay for purchases from the sheltered workshops. The workshops are then expected to pony-up and pay a commission fee to NIB or NISH. The best that can be said about this arrangement is that it is certainly an indirect form of federal financing. Some have called it a "scheme" and others have used phrases such as "under the table" and so forth. But whatever you call it, the system lacks accountability since neither NIB nor NISH are forced to justify their budgetary plans and needs.

The report explains as follows: "The investigating Subcommittee found no rational basis for the establishment of a 4 percent commission rate to be paid to the CNA's by the workshops from the production contracts they are awarded. Although the commission fee is the source of funding for the CNA's in executing their service, technical assistance, and support functions, there is no basic formula by which this figure was derived. It is agreed by both CNA's (NIB and NISH) that the commission fee is their key source of funding. But NIB could function with a lower rate and NISH would likely require a higher one. Furthermore, it is impossible to compute or estimate a more realistic commission rate since current financial, audit, and reporting data on CNA activities are inadequate." The Subcommittee reserved this matter for further study by the General Accounting Office. Once more data has been gathered, Congress and the Committee for Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Handicapped will need to arrive at a funding level and mechanism more reasonable than that which exists at present.

Compliance With Labor Standards: We told the Subcommittee that workshops and the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program are permitted to violate various labor laws while still receiving their federal contracts. This occurs most often with the payment of illegally low wages, even below the permissible subminimum wage allowed under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. We said the workshops should be punished when they violate the law.

With respect to this point, the report says: "The Committee (CPBOSH) should tighten reporting and justifications on

activities and expenditures by the CNAs, especially regarding fair labor laws... The Committee should require that all participant workshops demonstrate compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act or face commensurate sanction. Continued non-compliance should result in dismissal from the program."

Payrates: Monitor readers will recall the difficulty which Chairman Frank had in getting NIB witnesses (particularly Harold Richterman) to give him straight answers about procedures for setting payrates in workshops. Ultimately, Chairman Frank admonished Mr. Richterman that he (Mr. Frank) wanted no further talk with Mr. Richterman on this question. How does the Department of Labor know that the wage which a workshop proposes to pay a handicapped worker is fair and permissible under the law? Mr. Richterman was baffled by the question. All he knew was that the workshop sends a letter to the Department of Labor. He couldn't say what happens from there. All is well as long as the workshop says so. But this was hardly a satisfactory or reasonable answer for Mr. Frank, who ultimately gave up in frustration as he tried to unravel the mystery.

The law permitting subminimum wages (Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act) includes a variety of restrictions. The Department of Labor grants exemptions from the minimum wage and is supposed to be on guard to catch the violators. But the system doesn't work. Quoting from the report: "The Department of Labor has no procedure for routinely monitoring and verifying the issuance of individual work certificates. DOL currently relies on a certification from state vocational rehabilitation agencies when it issues a certificate to pay in-

dividuals less than 50 percent of the minimum wage in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. But DOL has no system or process for making its own verification, and currently has no plans to do so. . . DOL has increased the frequency and sample of workshop reviews, but no record is kept on the number of revocations, denials or suspension of individual certificates based on their findings at those workshops."

What a slipshod system. Never mind, says the Department of Labor. It has no intention to tighten up on enforcement or verification of payrates any time soon, if ever. We have been telling the Congress for years that the subminimum wage system simply breaks down when it comes to enforcing the law. How long will this be tolerated? Perhaps with this report we are now a step closer to finding out.

So, there you have it. The Subcommittee on Manpower and Housing has reported to Congress and the public. Perhaps no area of human endeavor has been so probed or surveyed in recent years as has the sheltered workshop. All studies agree. There are problems. But the lawmakers and bureaucrats have been long on their findings and short on solutions. The only major exception to this is the broad-scale reform proposal, called the Jobs and Business Opportunities for the Handicapped Act of 1982, offered in the 97th Congress by California Representative Barry M. Goldwater, Jr. That bill, H.R. 6529 (97th Congress, Second Session), urged reforms in areas such as upward mobility, compliance with fair labor standards, public accountability, and the overall funding mechanism and administrative structure of the Javits-Wagner-O'Day

Program.

But, H.R. 6529 came at a time when few in Congress really understood the extent and scope of the sheltered workshop problem. It was in a real sense a forerunner or a beacon—a light of hope, and a call for action. It tested the conscience and caused people to ask questions they had never thought of before. Without that bill, there would likely never have been a hearing before the Subcommittee on Manpower and Housing. The issues simply wouldn't have surfaced.

Now we have the Subcommittee's report. Like the bill offered by Mr. Goldwater, it sets a new agenda for real reforms in the federal programs that affect sheltered workshops. True, the report does not propose changing the law—not yet. On this question (whether the law should be left alone or overhauled) the report is completely silent. The administrators are given time to "clean up their act," but they are put on notice that they must do so and do it now. Also, if it demonstrates nothing else, the report

shows that Congress is beginning to understand the sheltered workshop problem and realize that corrective action must be taken.

This is a great step in the right direction but only a portent of things to come. We are changing what it means to be blind. Who can doubt that fact? The sheltered workshop system which affects so many thousands of blind people was not born in a day. Nor will it be reshaped and rebuilt in a day. We have fought simple fairness and justice, nothing more. We have asked for what other workers have—the right to organize and the right to receive a fair and decent wage. The workshops and the administrative agencies, backed by the power of the federal government, have fought us every step of the way. They have used their money and influence to grind us down. Still, they do not have the power to silence us. The blind will be heard, and we are being heard. That much is now clear. And, the needed reforms are coming.

I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS

by Betty Niceley

(Note: As Federationists know, Betty Niceley is the energetic President of the National Federation of the Blind of Kentucky. She is also the President of the recently formed National Association to Promote the Use of Braille (NAPUB). Every individual in this country who believes that there should be an increased emphasis on the use of Braille

and that it is up to us as blind people to do something about it will want to join NAPUB. As will be seen from Betty Niceley's article, NAPUB is already off and running, and dues are now being accepted. Braille is important to blind people. It is an essential component of the total array of tools we need to enable us to function effectively and

competitively in the mainstream of society. Just as we have done in so many other areas, we intend to tackle the problem with determination and vigor, and we intend to get results. We hope that every blind person in the country (and every sighted person, too) who believes that a problem exists and that it should be solved will join NAPUB and help with the work. Here is Betty Niceley's article.)

Dreams are often mysterious, but very beautiful. One of my favorite dreams has no mystery about it, but its unique beauty lies in the unity and performance of the greatest group of people I know—members of the National Federation of the Blind. As the dream unfolds, indifference, misunderstanding, and custodialism are working together to insure an extremely limited use of Braille materials. But then, along comes the NFB moving with commitment and expertise to right the wrongs which have been directed at the Braille system. Before my dream ends, enthusiasm and enlightenment prevail among those who are teaching, learning, and distributing Braille.

Frequently, a dream shared is a dream come true. This is especially so when dreams are shared with Dr. Kenneth Jernigan and other NFB members. On December 3, 1983, in Dr. Jernigan's office at our own National Center, a number of Federationists witnessed the birth of the National Association to Promote the Use of Braille (NAPUB). This new arm of our movement will reach out to play a direct role in the shaping of policies and procedures governing the availability of Braille and the quality of those methods used for teaching and learning the system. We will endeavor to change that

part of library statistics dealing with Braille readers. Braille Action Committees will be formed in each state. These committees will receive from NAPUB whatever assistance is needed to address specific Braille-related issues arising in the various states. This is only a thumbnail sketch of what we want NAPUB to accomplish.

Now, the only thing needed to make this dream come true is you. No doubt, every reader of this article will want to respond to the great challenge which lies before us. The responsibility is ours, because no other group but NFB can accomplish what has just been described. "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today." Send your \$1 membership dues to: National Federation of the Blind, P.O. Box 35242, Louisville, Kentucky 40232. NAPUB's constitution is in place, and both Braille and print copies are available in plentiful supply. The Constitution will be read at the NAPUB meeting at the Phoenix convention, and Braille and print copies will be distributed.

In the meantime we herewith print the purpose clause of NAPUB's constitution. It shows what the organization is and what we intend to do:

ARTICLE II—PURPOSES

The purposes of NAPUB shall be:

(A) to engage in activities intended to raise the awareness and increase the appreciation among blind and other interested persons of the importance of the reading and writing of Braille; (B) to promote and support both public and private efforts to establish and enlarge

facilities for the production and distribution of Braille reading matter; (C) to propose and support activities and seek changes in the policies and practices of governmental and private agencies which will bring about an increase in the availability of Braille reading matter in schools, libraries, and the blind community at large; (D) to raise standards in the teaching of Braille and the training of those who teach Braille; (E) to increase performance expectations of students of Braille; (F) to bring about increased availability of Braille and stimulate its use among the general blind population; and (G) to promote the establishment of Braille Action Committees in each of the states and Territories of the United States for the purpose of implementing the plans and policies of NAPUB. It shall also be the purpose of NAPUB to function as an integral part of the National Federation of the Blind.

The following officers will serve until an election can be held at the national convention in Phoenix: Betty Niceley, President; Emerson Foulke, First Vice President; David Murell, Second Vice President; Tim Cranmer, Secretary; and Denise Franklin, Treasurer.

Just remember that all Federationists working together can turn a dream into reality, and I'll see you in my dreams.

REPORT FROM KENTUCKY'S BRAILLE ACTION COMMITTEE

For some time now, Kentucky Federa-

tionists have been quite concerned about the ever increasing trend toward phasing out Braille materials. Also, there has been an apparent lack of emphasis on the use of the slate and stylus for writing Braille. Recognizing the depth of the problem and our responsibility to solve it, I appointed a Braille Action Committee. This committee has made significant progress in the first few months of its existence. Perhaps you would like to hear about some of the things which can be done at the state level.

BAC members first met with James Nelson, State Librarian, to solicit his help in accomplishing a two-fold purpose. First, we wanted to conduct our own survey of the state to get a more accurate number of Braille readers in Kentucky. Also, we wanted the library to have the capacity to provide for its patrons any requested specialized Braille materials. This latter project would require the use of library space and staff. Having received Mr. Nelson's promise of cooperation in these undertakings, we then visited key budget personnel. We were successful in getting them to include in the state budget designated funds for equipment needed by the library to carry out our suggested plans. Then, we turned our attention to the School for the Blind and found the administrative staff quite receptive to our ideas about Braille. During this school year we are sponsoring Braille writing contests among students at KSB. Contestants will use the slate and stylus and will write from memory limericks about Braille, which we have composed and supplied to them early for their practice. The contest will be timed and then graded according to the number of correct Braille characters per second.

Hopefully, we will stimulate a growing interest in Braille among our blind school children.

Dr. Emerson Foulke is now in the process of preparing material for our survey, which is designed to help us determine how many Braille readers there are in Kentucky. This information, along with any other we can supply, will be available to the Braille Action Committees throughout the country. Members

of Kentucky's Braille Action Committee are: Denise Franklin, Sue Scoggins, David Murrell, Tim Cranmer, Emerson Foulke, Chairman; and Betty Niceley, Ex-Officio Member.

I hope that when NAPUB meets in Phoenix this summer there will be lots of reports about growing membership and mounting interest in promoting the use of Braille.

**ON THE ROAD IN WEST VIRGINIA:
"AND THEY SAY THERE IS NO DISCRIMINATION"**
by James Gashel

Section 111 of Public Law 97-424 (known more popularly as the "Kennelly Amendment") authorizes state highway departments to permit the installation of vending machines at rest, recreation, and safety-rest areas throughout the federal interstate highway system. Priority for operating vending machines at these sites is to be given to the state agency designated under the Randolph-Sheppard Act to issue licenses to blind persons for the operation of vending facilities. The details of the passage of the Kennelly amendment and its implications were reported in the Braille Monitor of February, 1983.

Congress hoped that the Kennelly Amendment would result in more jobs for blind people. This could happen either through the maintenance and servicing of vending machines or through other employment programs which could be expanded with revenues generated by the highway vending stations. Either way,

the blind were to benefit. But, from the very beginning we knew, and we said, that the blind would have to be on guard. Decisions on how the Kennelly Amendment would be implemented were left largely in the hands of each state. Keeping track of developments and resisting program abuses would be our task as a Federation.

The following newspaper article illustrates how one state affiliate (the NFB of West Virginia) was called upon to meet this challenge. The article, which appeared on September 14, 1983, in the Charleston Daily Mail, presents the shocking facts of mismanagement and administrative abuse which still surround the highway vending program in West Virginia. Reports on this situation have not gone unnoticed by state and federal officials. Reforms are in the wind and inevitable. But, more about this later. First, here is the article:

Federation Of Blind Charges State With Exploitation In Jobs Program

The National Federation of the Blind of West Virginia has charged the state with "gross mismanagement and exploitation of blind persons" in its administration of a program intended to provide new employment for the blind.

The Federation says the Department of Highways is threatening to turn the blind persons into low paid janitors at interstate rest stops, in return for giving them space to operate vending machines. State officials said they wanted to look into the matter and did not have an immediate response to the charges.

Richard Porter, President of the NEBWW, said that a program created by federal legislation this year allows blind persons to earn a living through the operation and maintenance of vending machine facilities located at rest stops along the nation's interstate highways.

The law says that each state shall design and operate its own program through an agreement between the state and the state agency that administers the food service program for the blind. In West Virginia's case, that would be the Department of Highways and the Society for the Blind and Severely Disabled, a subsidiary of the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

But the Federation charged this week that the Society for the Blind rushed headlong into the program without proper planning or consideration for the blind persons it would employ.

"We understand that the Society got

the program started around the first of September at 16 locations and six hours later it was ordered shutdown," said Porter. "And we understand that the Society still has not agreed upon the final terms of a contract with the Department of Highways."

Meanwhile, said Porter, despite the absence of a contract, the Society has moved ahead with the rental of some 40 to 50 vending machines at a cost per month of \$114 each. "The machines have been installed, but not one blind person is earning a penny from them," Porter charged. "They're just sitting there wasting the money of West Virginia taxpayers, because the Society acted without proper planning."

Porter said that, according to the proposed contract which neither the DOH nor the Society has signed, blind persons would not be permitted to operate these vending machine installations as independent entrepreneurs as they are now permitted to do with other snack bars and cafeterias under the state's food service facilities program.

"Under the proposed contract," he said, "not only will these vendors be expected to attend to the machines, but they will also be required to perform janitorial duties 12 hours a day, 365 days a year throughout the rest stop buildings."

"Up to now, DOH maintenance personnel have been paid more than five dollars an hour to do this janitorial work. If this provision is allowed to stand it means the DOH will be receiving more than \$400,000 worth of janitorial service each year in exchange for a little bit of space to set up a few vending machines."

"We consider this to be nothing more

than pure exploitation of the blind," Porter said, "and the Society should never even have considered a contract that permits such exploitation."

This news story and variations of it received wide circulation throughout West Virginia, prompting state officials and the West Virginia Society for the Blind and Severely Disabled to move rapidly on opening or reopening the vending sites. The agreement referred to in the article was formally executed on September 16, and the machines were in operation at some locations two days later. But, all was far from well. According to a source in the state Attorney General's office, who asked to remain anonymous, the agreement between the Department of Highways and Vocational Rehabilitation "is full of flaws, and someone ought to question it." We (the National Federation of the Blind, the watchdogs of the public programs established for the benefit of the blind) could hardly turn down the invitation.

The contract is full of flaws, both programmatic and legal. But the worst of the lot is the clause which requires the blind vendors to double as rest stop attendants. It is not that blind persons cannot or should not serve as janitors or even that they should not replace the sighted state employees who formerly performed these duties. But anyone who becomes a rest stop attendant (blind or sighted) should be paid a fair wage and given benefits comparable to those of others with a similar assignment. Fair is fair. More to the point, the law is the law.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended says: "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States ... shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance..."

The West Virginia Department of Highways is a program or activity receiving federal financial assistance under various federal-aid highway laws. The West Virginia Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is also a program or activity receiving federal financial assistance under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and some of these funds are also channeled to the Society for the Blind and Severely Disabled. Each of these agencies has the obligation not to discriminate.

Yet, consider how they have combined forces in a formal agreement to discriminate. Prior to the contract, the Department of Highways had persons in its employ on duty at the rest stops twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. These were sighted employees. Their pay was not more than \$5.00 per hour not including fringe benefits. If you add in the benefits, the compensation for each rest stop employee on the Department of Highway's payroll would exceed \$7.00 per hour. But, under the agreement with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Society, the Department of Highways now gets the services of blind attendants for twelve hours per day, substituting these individuals for the sighted people formerly assigned at each location.

So far, so good. But, wait. For

their labors, which include cleaning the bathrooms and public waiting areas of the rest stops, while servicing the vending machines as well, the blind attendants will receive the minimum wage (\$3.35 per hour) plus a "training subsidy" of \$1.15 per hour, the latter portion being for the first six months on duty. At this point the wage will presumably fall back to \$3.35 per hour. And, no benefits. The net effect of this is a contractual conspiracy to discriminate against the blind by two government agencies, not to mention a whopping cost-savings which the Department of Highways is realizing out of the bargain. And, what a bargain it is. Here are blind people employed as janitors and vending machine attendants at rest-stops at roughly half the wage which the Department of Highways was previously paying to its sighted employees. Moreover, during the twelve-hour shift each day not covered by the blind attendants, the Department of Highways still maintains an attendant on duty at each rest stop and pays the going rate and benefits for state employees for that purpose. Twice the minimum wage and more.

Is this really what Congress intended in passing the Kennelly Amendment? We think not. To prove that it isn't, federal authorities are now being asked to investigate the circumstances surrounding the entire agreement and review its civil rights implications.

Federal regulations implementing Section 504 say "no qualified handicapped person shall, on the basis of handicap,

be subjected to discrimination in employment under any program or activity" receiving or benefiting from federal financial assistance. This prohibition applies to all activities of an employer such as hiring, upgrading, promotion, award of tenure, demotion, transfer, lay-off, termination, right of return from lay-off, and rehiring; rates of pay and any other form of compensation and changes in compensation; job assignments, job classifications, organizational structures, position descriptions, lines of progression, and seniority lists; leaves of absence, sick leave, or any other leave; fringe benefits available by virtue of employment, whether or not administered by the recipient. These are only a few, but the most relevant of the employer's specific obligations. They apply to the West Virginia Department of Highways as well as to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and to the Society for the Blind and Severely Disabled.

None of these agencies, since all three are recipients of federal financial assistance, may discriminate in their employment of blind persons. This is the law, and we shall insist upon its vigorous enforcement. The West Virginia story is the story of exploitation, pure and simple. It is the very kind of treatment that Section 504 was designed and intended to stop. Stop it we shall, and stop it we must. This is why we have formed the National Federation of the Blind.

NAC IN TRANSITION—BLEECKER'S LAST DAYS: REPORT FROM DAYTONA BEACH

by Rami Rabby

On Saturday and Sunday, November 5 and 6, 1983, at Daytona Beach, Florida, the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) held its customary annual membership and board of directors meeting. While two hundred fifty plus of us staged our customary demonstration outside the NAC meetings, I was assigned the dubiously gratifying responsibility of sitting inside the NAC meetings, for the purpose of observing the "field" (Oh! how they do love that word!) in action.

Looked at superficially, the agenda for both NAC's annual membership meeting and NAC's board of directors meeting might have been considered routine. After all, there were the greetings from local NAC-accredited agencies and from organizations supportive of NAC's goals and objectives; Executive Committee minutes were approved; reports from NAC's Commissions on Standards, on the Advancement of Standards, and on Accreditation, as well as from its Long-Range Planning Committee, were given; the Executive Director delivered his message to the group, and told of doings at the NAC office; amendments to the bylaws were presented and approved; and, of course, candidates for election were nominated, lame ducks bade farewell, and rising stars assumed their new offices. So much for the formal agendas of these meetings.

However, these were no ordinary meetings, and this was, by no means, your normal NAC conclave. For this is a year of transition for NAC: Richard Bleecker, its executive director for the past ten years, is out, and his successor will soon be selected, if he/she has not already been selected. And at Daytona Beach, under that thin veil of civility and outward veneer of diplomatic greetings and farewell, one could sense the tenseness and anxiety of a storm-tossed organization, and the deep divisions and bitter animosities between opposing forces, divisions over both basic philosophy and operating tactics.

The following are my principal thoughts, impressions, and conclusions as I observed this drama—all of them amply documented by NAC's own words and actions.

HOW MANY WERE THERE?

Normally, it should be possible to gauge an organization's strength and vitality by the number of people taking an active part in its annual membership meetings. After all, that is how we in the National Federation of the Blind gauge our strength and vitality—by the massive attendance at our national conventions, and, for that matter, by the impressive number of participants we manage to bring together at our annual NAC demonstrations.

Accordingly, as I walked into NAC's annual corporate membership meeting, I was somewhat astonished to hear a room packed with what must have been close to one hundred people. One might have thought that every one of NAC's ninety-two accredited agencies and schools was represented at that meeting! Right? Wrong! For upon closer observation a quite different picture emerged.

True that every one of Florida's seven NAC-accredited agencies and schools must have been represented. However, they were represented not merely by their executive directors and principals but by many members of their staffs and boards of directors: Judy Lloyd, Executive Director of the Visually Impaired Persons of Southwest Florida, a newly accredited agency, said so publicly, as did Edward McCoy, Executive Director of the Conklin Center for the Blind and Multihandicapped. Add to these the members of NAC's fifty-four sponsoring and supporting organizations, together with their sun worshiping spouses, relatives, friends, and other assorted guests, and you have a room that doesn't seem so full even though it is packed.

This overall impression of an inactive and disinterested membership was further confirmed by the fact that, whenever a voice vote was taken, the number of people who participated could certainly not have exceeded twenty or twenty-five. Finally, as I was on my way out, at the close of the meeting, I stopped by the literature desk to ask what material was available. A man who was standing next to me picked up one of the items on the desk and said: "This thing is called the Standard Bearer, it looks like their newsletter or something!" "One more of those guests, I suppose," I chuckled to

myself as I stepped out of the room and moved toward the deafening sound of our two hundred fifty plus Federationists, chanting: "Fifty thousand blind people can't be wrong!"

THE INFLUENCE OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND ON NAC

As I have already mentioned, NAC has fifty-four sponsoring and supporting organizations. In his presentation to the membership, Richard Umsted, Chairman of NAC's Commission on the Advancement of Standards, reported that, since the beginning of fiscal year 1983, eleven organizations have declared themselves as sponsors and supporters of NAC. And who may these organizations be?

Well, it appears that no less than six out of the eleven are state affiliates and interest groups of the American Council of the Blind (ACB), while two more out of the remaining five are state chapters of the American Association of Workers for the Blind (AAWB). Add to this the fact that Oral Miller, ACB's National Representative, is now chairing NAC's National Steering Committee on Standards and Accreditation, and the fact that Leroy Saunders and James Olsen, two members of ACB's board of directors, are also members of NAC's executive committee, and a picture begins to emerge of interlocking directorates and of ACB literally taking NAC over by storm. (Or is it the other way around, with NAC already having taken over the ACB? And, of course, in the background is Bill Gallagher's American Foundation for the Blind controlling ALL.)

This impression was clearly confirmed

by Richard Unsted, who stated in no uncertain terms in his report: "Consumers, as exemplified by ACB, can and will make a difference for NAC!" As I watched in amazement the leaders and subdivisions of the ACB flocking in droves to prop up the failing philosophy and sagging structure of NAC, I was reminded of Winston Churchill's delightful comment to a packed House of Commons, as he watched some members of his own party defecting to vote with the opposition Labor Party: "Never before have I seen rats swimming toward a sinking ship!"

STAGNATION

But what evidence do we have that NAC is, in fact, dying? Once again, we need only listen to NAC's own words. Time and again, during both the corporate membership meeting and the board of directors meeting, NAC's leaders bemoaned the stagnant pace of new agency applications for accreditation and urged each other and the audience to link funding to accreditation—that is, to persuade funding sources, such as governmental entities, foundations, and corporations to make the granting of funds to agencies and schools for the blind conditional upon accreditation by NAC. Desperate measures, indeed!

Here again is Richard Umsted, this time pleading: "Although NAC has continued to stimulate interest in accreditation, the Commission on the Advancement of Standards maintains that there will not be significant numbers of new applications for accreditation until sufficient incentives and tangible benefits are put into place, specifically in the form of linking funding to accredi-

tation. NAC's friends—consumers, sponsors, supporters—need to assume a leadership role to see that this linking is achieved."

Then, MacAllister Upshaw, presenting to the board of directors NAC's long range plan for the years 1985-89, on behalf of the Long Range Planning Committee, warned: "The plan projects that the number of new applications for accreditation will decrease. This decrease, coupled with agencies withdrawing, or with removal from accreditation...means that the total number of accredited agencies is expected to increase slowly in the first two years of the five covered by this plan, and then level off for the remaining three years of the plan. This is the Committee's considered judgment of what will happen without sufficient incentives and benefits."

Not wanting to feel left out, Owen Davison, Chairman of NAC's Commission on Standards, joined the funeral dirge. After describing how NAC's efforts to establish standards for dog guide training schools were first abandoned for lack of interest on the part of the schools themselves and then reinstated once more last year, he concluded tearfully: "I am sorry to tell you that, from what we see, there has been little, if any, progress that's been made in this respect since that action a year ago."

Making the funding of agencies and schools for the blind conditional upon NAC accreditation is, undoubtedly, the most draconian measure possible for combatting the profound lethargy and deep disinterest in accreditation which apparently pervades the "field." Sensing perhaps that NAC just might be ac-

cused of too totalitarian an approach, Richard Umsted quickly offered a less drastic alternative, one that is less characteristic of the oppressive dictator than of the benevolent despot: "Last year you heard that the American Foundation for the Blind offered to help defray accreditation costs of private agencies in financial need when they were seeking NAC accreditation They have extended this offer until June of 1984. Two organizations have already taken advantage of this offer and we know that there are several others who are planning to do so shortly Likewise, the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) continues to offer to defray costs to new workshop applicants. One workshop has taken advantage of this."

So said Richard Umsted, and so spoke the other NAC leaders: Get the accreditation any way you can—bribe, blackmail, threaten to cut off their money. Do what you must, but get the accreditation. Show "professionalism" in action.

WHAT!

FREE ENTERPRISE IN ACCREDITATION!

Yet, even stagnation might be tolerable to a moribund accrediting body if that were the only threat to its fragile existence. But it isn't! The real nemesis, as far as NAC is concerned, has appeared on NAC's horizon only within the last year or so, in the form of—God forbid!—competition!

Yes, just as General Motors competes with Chrysler; just as Hertz competes with Avis; just as the National Information Bureau competes with the Council of Better Business Bureaus; so the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) has begun to

compete (quite successfully) with NAC. And why not? Let us listen again to Richard Umsted, NAC's resident theologian, as he contrasted good and evil: "While the ACB is strengthening its stance ... CARF is threatening NAC's purpose"; and that is a no-no! "Competition," intoned Umsted, "is an unacceptable practice in the accreditation field!" One would think he was talking about nuclear war!

WILL THE REAL DICTATOR PLEASE STAND UP

After observing NAC in action and listening to such concepts as linking funding to accreditation and monopolizing the accreditation field flow so trippingly from their tongues, it is hard to believe that Richard Bleecker, in his message to the membership, had the gall to talk of NFB's "dreams of dominance in this field."

In fact, sprinkled throughout the two NAC meetings were strong indications that NAC has stepped up its longstanding campaign to inculcate in its member agencies, in funding sources, and in the public an almost religious belief in the purity of its standards as a distillation of "best practice" in their inviolability and in their unquestionability. Edward McCoy, Executive Director of the Conklin Center for the Blind and Multi-handicapped in Florida, has apparently learned the lesson well. Just listen to him as he relates his agency's experience with NAC: "One of the quickest ways to silence the new board member who doesn't quite understand or is questioning policy ... is the simple statement: 'We have this policy because the standards require it, and that's that!'"

Yes, indeed, how right was Lord Acton when he said: "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

SILENCING NAC'S OWN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In silencing questioning members of his agency's board of directors, what model, one might ask, was Edward McCoy following? To any observer of the NAC meetings at Daytona Beach, the answer was surely obvious and quickly apparent. I refer specifically to three incidents which took place during the NAC meetings and which demonstrated well the extent to which the powers that be at NAC are prepared to move in order to consolidate their authority and control within NAC's Executive Committee, conceal their decision making process behind the closed doors of that body, and strip the board of directors itself of the last vestiges of meaningful self-expression which it may have claimed before. The shameless architect of this process seemed to be none other than Morton Pepper, a New York City lawyer who, for almost thirty years, has been schooled in the administration of well-entrenched and unresponsive rehabilitation systems at the Jewish Guild for the Blind, one of the nation's ideal training grounds for this purpose.

As Chairman of NAC's Bylaws Committee, Morton Pepper proposed the following amendment, which he characterized as "fairly simple." "We propose," he said, "to amend Section IV of Article 7, to 'provide that Chairpersons of all standing committees be members of the Executive Committee.'" Under such circumstances, it is fair to wonder what on earth would move a politically ambitious

professional in a blindness system to seek a position on NAC's board of directors, a body almost totally devoid of a meaningful role in NAC's decision-making process.

This fact was further reinforced by Richard Bleecker in his message to the membership. Speaking of the document which is produced by the teams which evaluate the accreditation worthiness of agencies and schools applying for NAC's seal of approval, Bleecker said: "The on-site review report is confidential. NAC would not release one without the expressed permission of the affected agency or school. In fact, NAC would resist a subpoena for such a report. And, while the Commission on Accreditation studies these reports, they aren't even shared with the NAC board of directors, except in highly unusual circumstances."

Finally, NAC's concentration of power and control in the hidden recesses of its executive committee was perhaps best illustrated during the board of directors discussion of the organization's search for a new executive director. Otis Stephens, NAC's outgoing president, had just described how the executive committee, serving as the search committee, had reduced the 110 original applicants for the position down to a final short list of three. At that point, Kent Wardell (I suppose the rehabilitation fraternity would call him "an unsocialized board member") raised his voice to suggest that, now that the executive committee had reached a short list of three candidates, the board of directors not be "disenfranchized" from the selection process and be involved in the final choice. In fact, Mr. Wardell was about to make a motion when Morton

Pepper, ever mindful of how effectively parliamentary procedure can be used to frustrate the voice of the rank and file member (or even the majority of the board members), headed him off at the pass with a swift though misleading reference to NAC's bylaws, as well as to a technicality in New York State law. Mr. Wardell's motion was not heard. One other courageous though unidentified member of the board of directors raised his voice in opposition to the selection process. He was pushed aside and ignored. Otis Stephens quickly moved on to the next item of business. The power of the executive committee remained intact and undiluted. And, just in case there was any doubt about it, Morton Pepper had once more demonstrated how well he had earned the distinguished service award which was bestowed upon him at NAC's annual banquet the previous evening.

BUT WHY IS BLEECKER OUT

Although the preceding account touches on issues of substance and significance, I have not so far analyzed what must be regarded as the principal theme underlying NAC's sessions at Daytona Beach—namely the departure of Richard Blecker and the circumstances surrounding it.

Even the least astute observer of NAC's meetings must have recognized that a struggle of gargantuan proportions is now taking place within NAC, between opposing forces and conflicting philosophies. Take Don Wedewer, for example, the Director of the Florida Division of Blind Services. While Richard Unsted, MacAllister Upshaw, and others were beating the drums for the linkage of funding to accreditation, Wedewer was

clearly not going to toe the party line: "I would like to just definitely disagree," he said. "We have no intention of using funding as a whip, ... because persuasion and example, particularly, have been working."

Nevertheless, whatever other conflicts and divisions may be raging within NAC, it is unquestionably NAC's tactics, in general, and its tactics toward NFB, in particular, which are at the heart of the current struggle. Two incidents took place which may point to a new direction in NAC's strategic planning. First, it was revealed at the board of directors meeting that on September 14, 1983, NAC's executive committee discussed a recommendation that the organization consider withdrawing from membership in the Affiliated Leadership League of and for the Blind of America (ALL). As veteran Federationists know, ALL's clear, though unstated, purpose has always been to rally the "field" (AFB, ACB, NAC, NIB, etc.) and consolidate its resources in opposition to the growing influence of the National Federation of the Blind. In short, ALL is the American Foundation for the Blind's pawn, its front for waging war upon the organized blind. It was reported that NAC's executive committee took no action on this recommendation but planned to do so at its next meeting. Second, in presenting the report of the Long-Range Planning Committee to the board of directors, MacAllister Upshaw referred to NAC's resolution of 1979, which attacked the leadership of the NFB as harmful to the interests of the blind and attempted to thrust a wedge between the leaders of the NFB and its rank and file membership. As Federationists know, that resolution did more to solidify our

forces and strengthen us in our resolve to reform the existing rehabilitation establishment than any other single event, before or since. NAC's Long-Range Planning Committee must have finally reached the same conclusion: "The Committee," said MacAllister Upshaw, "decided to recommend to this board that its policy regarding the national leadership of the National Federation of the Blind be reviewed during its fifth anniversary, next November, 1984....The Committee believes that it would be propitious for the board, in these next twelve months, to reflect upon the appropriateness and utility of this policy."

Is it possible, we might ask, with equal "appropriateness and utility" that in the life and death struggle between the brawlers at NAC and its Brahmins, the Brahmins may have gained the upper hand? Is it possible that the cooler heads at NAC may have decided to depoliticize NAC and to refrain from such activities as publicly vilifying the National Federation of the Blind, lobbying to try to kill our Job Opportunities for the Blind project, and working to damage the careers of those who would dare to criticize their standards and accreditation decisions? Is it possible that Richard Bleecker, the chief brawler himself, may have been the principal casualty of a change in direction and a fresh strategy? While we cannot offer a definitive "yes" or "no" to those questions, perhaps the clearest evidence of NAC's internal reassessment and of the reason for Bleecker's departure came in the closing moments of the board of directors meeting.

The incident in question brought into clear focus the contrast between Blee-

cker, the master of the "dirty tricks" school of accreditation, on the one hand, and James McComas, the high-minded president of Mississippi State University and incoming President of NAC. Bleecker had managed to obtain one of the signs used by our Federationists in the demonstration outside the NAC meeting and brought it with him onto the platform. Then, when his time came to bid a final farewell to NAC, he said: "I don't really have any special closing words to say to you; but since so much has been given to me, there's something I would like to give to you; and I wonder, Jim McComas, if you would be so kind as to come forward please, and as you do I might mention that he doesn't know what I am about to do—and I just wonder what he is thinking right now.... I'd like to help Dr. Jim get off to a good start if I possibly can. There's been a lot of talk about the NFB this weekend—maybe too much talk. I must confess that I have always listened very carefully to the NFB over all of these years and carefully read all of their material, trying very hard to understand their point of view and to cooperate with them and to accept, whenever possible, any position they had that makes sense and that I can agree with. And once in a while I do find something that NFB has to say which has some value and makes some sense to me; and I think it would be really great if the incoming president could get off to a good start by showing them he also is willing to listen to the NFB and accept and follow any advice they might have that makes sense to him. And from a growing collection of NFB material that I have assembled over the years, I would like to leave Jim with one piece of such

advice which does make sense to me." Whereupon Bleecker pinned onto McComas' chest the NFB sign which read: "Changing directors doesn't change directions."

McComas was not amused. In fact, he must have been seething with anger. Without saying a word, he returned to his seat and waited for a more appropriate opportunity to deliver his response. That opportunity presented itself soon after when he was invited to address the group as its newly elected president. He did not refer to Bleecker specifically, but his target was clear: "An organization built primarily on a negative base," he said, "has a very narrow appeal and does not have very much to recommend it. Therefore, I would recommend that, whenever and wherever possible, let us take the high road!"

Richard Bleecker's final remarks and actions before leaving office were representative of much of NAC's discussions at Daytona Beach. NAC's leaders are obsessed with an almost paranoid concern and a near pathological preoccupation with the National Federation of the Blind. Time and again—during the corporate membership meeting, during the board of directors meeting, and during

the banquet—they would apologize for spending too much time talking about and discussing the NFB, but time and again they would be drawn back to the subject—worried by us, troubled by us, frightened by us.

As for me, I found myself constantly baffled by the sheer unreality and artificiality of it all and by the seemingly unbridgeable gulf between the philosophy and personal experience of NAC's leaders inside those meetings on the one hand and of our Federationists outside those meetings on the other. While they talked of standards that reflect "best practice," I could not help but think of actual practice—of blind workshop workers who are paid less than the minimum wage; of Fred Schroeder, whom the "field" refuses to certify as a mobility instructor simply because he is blind; of \$50,000 squandered, merely to prevent blind workshop workers in Cincinnati from unionizing; and of the executive director of Volunteer Blind Industries of Morristown, Tennessee, who muzzles his workers and prevents them from communicating with their elected representatives in Congress. Are you listening, Mr. McComas? Do you understand?

If you or a friend would like to remember the National Federation of the Blind in your will, you can do so by employing the following language:

"I give, devise, and bequeath unto National Federation of the Blind, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation, the sum of \$_____ (or "_____ percent of my net estate" or "The following stocks and bonds: _____") to be used for its worthy purposes on behalf of blind persons."

A CHANGE AT THE LIBRARY

Even the strongest critics of the National Federation of the Blind would not deny that we are persistent and determined. Moreover, we know what we think and what we want to achieve. Sometimes the results of our actions are slow in coming and difficult to trace. At other times they are direct and obvious:

Baltimore, Maryland
August 3, 1983

Mr. Jim Murray, Supervisor
Maryland State Library for the Blind
and Physically Handicapped
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Mr. Murray:

The 1983 Convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland will be on October 14, 15, and 16. The Convention sessions and banquet will be held at the Gaithersburg Marriott Hotel at 620 Lakeforest Boulevard, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877.

We would like to invite you to speak to the Convention on Sunday morning, October 16, at 9:30 a.m. You will have approximately one-half hour for your remarks and for questions.

Our Convention promises to be both informative and exciting. We look forward to seeing you on October 16. Please let me hear from you.

Sincerely,
James Omvig, President
National Federation of the Blind
of Maryland

Baltimore, Maryland
September 7, 1983

Mr. James Omvig, President
National Federation of the Blind
of Maryland

Dear Mr. Omvig:

I look forward to speaking to the convention members on Sunday morning, October 16, 1983.

Sincerely,
James Murray, Director
Maryland State Library for the Blind
and Physically Handicapped

Baltimore, Maryland
October 3, 1983

Mr. James Murray, Director
Maryland State Library for the Blind
and Physically Handicapped

Dear Mr. Murray:

I am pleased that you will be able to make a presentation to our 1983 convention at the Marriott Hotel in Gaithersburg on Sunday, October 16. Your presentation will be from 9:05 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Of course, you would be welcome to attend our entire convention.

If you have questions, you may contact me during the day at 594-3446.

Very truly yours,

James H. Omvig, President
National Federation of the Blind
of Maryland

Baltimore, Maryland
November 17, 1983

Ms. Nettie Taylor
Assistant State Superintendent
for Libraries
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Ms. Taylor:

The age of consumerism is here. With its welcome arrival we have ushered out, or should have, the tired old concepts of "we know what is best for you" or "why should we listen to you, you are just blind people?" However, in Maryland I wonder.

The blind of Maryland have long been concerned with the quality of library services which are provided by your agency. Some of the services are okay, while many are not. However, recent events lead us to conclude that the entire situation may be far worse than we had imagined.

Let me show you what I mean. In order to open up a discussion on library services and to establish meaningful communication, we invited Jim Murray to make a presentation in August of 1982 at our state convention. He agreed to do so. A day or two before the convention he notified us that he would be unable to attend because of a family emergency. We did not question this action.

Again, in an effort to open lines of communication, we invited Mr. Murray to address our 1983 convention. Under date of August 3 I wrote Mr. Murray request-

ing that he make a presentation on Sunday morning, October 16 (see attachment 1). Mr. Murray wrote back to me on September 7 indicating he would be glad to appear on Sunday morning (see attachment 2). On October 3, after I had planned the entire agenda, I wrote again confirming the date and providing a precise time on our agenda (see attachment 3).

A few days later (after he had received my October 3 letter) I was more than a little surprised when Mr. Murray called to say that he had understood that his convention appearance was scheduled for Saturday morning and that he would be unable to participate with us on Sunday. Since he had agreed in writing to appear on Sunday, this conversation seemed odd to me. Nevertheless, to accommodate Mr. Murray I agreed to shift convention items so that he could appear late Saturday afternoon (I arranged to shift a Saturday speaker to Sunday morning).

The Saturday afternoon time for Mr. Murray's appearance came and went, but he did not. There was no phone call, no explanation, no excuse, no substitute, and no apology.

We of the National Federation of the Blind represent the blind of this state, and we deserve to be treated with dignity and respect by persons hired with public funds to provide services which we need and want. As you will observe from the tone of the enclosed resolution (see attachment 4), the delegates to our convention were greatly disturbed by Mr. Murray's inexcusable and shabby behavior.

For the record, I have had no communication from Mr. Murray concerning the reason for his failure to keep his com-

mitment. I have waited as long as I have to write you in the hope that a plausible explanation might be forthcoming.

I request that you look into this matter immediately and provide me with whatever explanation you can. I also request that you take steps to make sure that this type of conduct is not repeated.

Very truly yours,
James H. Omvig, President
National Federation of the Blind
of Maryland

cc:

Governor Harry Hughes
Delegate Elijah Cummings
Mr. Frank Kurt Cylke
Dr. Kenneth Jernigan

RESOLUTION 83-13

Regarding Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Whereas, accountability of state officials to the public they serve is a recognized principle of sound government;

And, Whereas, Mr. James Murray is Director of the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped;

And, Therefore, he is directly responsible to blind consumers of library services;

And, Whereas, Mr. Murray agreed in writing to be present at the 17th Annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland to inform the blind about available services and to become educated concerning our needs and

wants;

And, Whereas, in flagrant disregard of this commitment he failed to appear and failed to provide any explanation;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the membership of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland in convention assembled this 15th day of October, 1983, in the City of Gaithersburg, Maryland, that the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland condemn and deplore the discourtesy and disregard of the commitment embodied in this irresponsible action;

And, Be It Further Resolved that this organization bring this irresponsible behavior to the attention of appropriate authorities.

Washington, D.C.
December 1, 1983

Mr. James H. Omvig, President
National Federation of the Blind
of Maryland

Dear Jim:

Thank you for informing me of the situation regarding library involvement in your October conference. I am investigating the matter and will get back to you as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,
Frank Kurt Cylke, Director
National Library Service for the
Blind and Physically Handicapped

cc:

Nettie Taylor
Jim Murray
Mary Levering

Washington, D.C.
December 1, 1983

Mr. James Murray
Maryland State Library for the Blind
and Physically Handicapped
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Jim:

I have just received a copy of the file regarding your relationship with the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland—specifically referencing the situation regarding their recent conference.

As you know, we consider it vital that blind and physically handicapped individual users of the program be fully informed and involved, when possible, in all matters relating to service. Further, we believe that respect is due every person with whom we come in contact.

I have asked Mary Levering to contact you and Nettie Taylor to the point of determining the facts and to developing an appropriate response to James Omvig.

Sincerely yours,
Frank Kurt Cylke, Director
National Library Service for the
Blind and Physically Handicapped

cc:

James Omvig
Nettie Taylor
Mary Levering

Annapolis, Maryland
December 12, 1983

Ms. Nettie Taylor
Assistant State Superintendent
for Libraries
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Ms. Taylor:

James H. Omvig of the National Federation of the Blind was kind enough to send me a copy of his November 17, 1983, letter which was addressed to you. I am quite concerned about the actions (or rather failure to act) on the part of Jim Murray of your office. I do, however, feel confident that since this matter has been brought to your attention, you will see that it is remedied immediately. It is my hope that a meeting will be scheduled in the very near future so as your office and members of the Maryland Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind might "open lines of communication."

Please keep me apprised of your progress.

Sincerely yours,
Elijah E. Cummings
Delegate—39th District

cc: Mr. James H. Omvig

Baltimore, Maryland
December 12, 1983

Mr. James H. Omvig, President
National Federation of the Blind
of Maryland

Dear Mr. Omvig:

I am in receipt of your letter of November 17 concerning the fact that Mr. Murray of our staff at the Library for

the Blind and Physically Handicapped did not appear as scheduled to speak at the 1983 Convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland on Saturday, October 15.

I am indeed sorry that this happened. For whatever reason it was irresponsible of Mr. Murray not to have notified you or to have had this office provide a suitable replacement.

I can assure you that we would welcome and would accept another invitation to meet with your organization or any of its officers. You make a reference in your letter to concern about the quality of library services provided by the library. We would be interested in your comments and would like for you to make an appointment to visit the library and to discuss your concerns with us.

We have recently made some organiza-

tional changes in the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped particularly in order to prepare for automating the operation of the library. Mr. Lance Finney is now the administrator of the library. Please address all correspondence to him in the future.

I look forward to an opportunity to talk and meet with you personally.

Sincerely,

Nettie B. Taylor
Assistant State Superintendent
for Libraries

cc:

Governor Harry Hughes
Delegate Elijah Cummings
Mr. Frank Kurt Cylke
Dr. Kenneth Jernigan

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EFFORT BY THE ORGANIZED BLIND OF CALIFORNIA

There are those who say that our movement is hostile to all of the governmental and private agencies doing work with the blind. There are those who say that the National Federation of the Blind of California is not the leading force in bringing improvement to the lives of the blind of that state. There are those who say that all of the blind persons who formerly supported Bob Acosta still do so with undiminished vigor and that they are not interested in being reconciled to the National Federation of the Blind:

Sacramento, California
November 8, 1983

To the Blind Using the Northern California Regional Library:

Probably the single most important service which affects blind citizens more than any other is our library services.

For many years, the Braille and Talking Book Library of the California State Library in Sacramento has served the

blind of Northern and Central California by distributing Braille and Talking Books as a Regional Library of the Library of Congress National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Although the books are provided through federal funds allocated to the Library of Congress, there are no federal funds to support the Regional Library. Thus, the Braille and Talking Book Library is funded by state funds allocated through the California State Library.

As you know, there has been a state hiring freeze, which has been in existence since the inauguration of Governor Deukmejian. This freeze has now been extended to January, 1984. Our Braille and Talking Book Library is being forced to seriously diminish its service to the blind and disabled because of a gradual reduction in staff through attrition and the inability for staff replacement. As of November 16th, the Library will be suffering from a loss of one-third of its original staff of twenty-three, and unless a hiring freeze exemption is granted, we shall suffer a more serious reduction in Library services.

It is essential that we immediately communicate with Governor Deukmejian and members of the California Legislature to request an exemption from the hiring freeze for the Books for the Blind Section of the California State Library so that vacant staff positions can be filled.

If there was ever a time for us to join together for collective action, the time is now. Send your letters today and ask your family and friends to send letters, too. A master file will be maintained in this office to hold copies of letters, telegrams, and memos con-

cerning telephone communications which are directed to the Governor and the members of the California Legislature. If we can develop a large file of correspondence over this matter, our efforts can be strengthened. Therefore, please send copies of all correspondence and memos concerning the hiring freeze exemption to the National Federation of the Blind of California at the above address.

Cordially,
Sharon Gold, President
National Federation of the Blind
of California

Albany, California
November 23, 1983

Dear Sharon:

Thank you for sending the release on the state library situation.

I teach a class here at the Center every Monday from 3:30 to 4:30, which I call "Blind Resources." I will have your release read to the class on November 28, 1983.

I sincerely hope that you will continue to keep the California Orientation Center for the Blind on your mailing list for releases such as this one.

Very truly yours,
Al Gil
Rehabilitation Counselor
for the Blind

Sacramento, California
November 30, 1983

Dear Sharon:

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation for your support and assistance in helping us acquire our six exemptions from the hiring freeze. We realize we could not have achieved this result without your concerted efforts on our behalf.

We are in the process of interviewing prospective applicants and hiring for these positions.

Once hiring and training has been

completed we will restore the library services which were greatly reduced in the past due to the lack of full staff support.

We hope you will convey our thanks to those you know participated in this effort.

Sincerely,

Gary E. Strong

California State Librarian

ON THE NATURE OF GIVING

Columbus, Ohio
December 9, 1983

Guideposts

Carmel, New York

Attention: Sue Monk Kidd

Dear Mrs. Kidd:

It was with interest that I read the article you wrote in the October issue of Guideposts "Sincerely." I agree with you that God often speaks to us through the common experiences we have and have often enjoyed your delightful way of sharing out of your personal life to illustrate the point.

But I was troubled by the message you brought out of this article. The situation finds you and your daughter going to the store. There is a meeting with a beggar, and your daughter is concerned about what is happening to the man. Eventually she convinces you to give the beggar some money and, further, compels you to give all the money in your purse:

a dollar bill and two quarters. And your message, if I understood it correctly, was that this commonplace incident with the trustfulness of your daughter helped remind you of the importance of giving what we have and trusting God to take care of us. But you walked away, and the beggar remains. No, you didn't mention the fact, but it is true.

Let me remind you of a biblical account which is similar to your story. In the third chapter of Acts (the first ten verses) we read about a beggar who asked alms of Peter and John. Peter's response to the request was to acknowledge that he had no money to give him—but he would give him what he did have. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." And Peter helped him to his feet, and he walked. Mrs. Kidd, you gave what was left in your purse. Peter didn't even have that but what he did was of immense value to the beggar. It goes without saying that, had Peter done

what you did, the story would never have been recorded in the book of Acts.

But there is something else that needs to be examined. Too often, as we read the accounts of Jesus as he worked among the blind, the deaf, the lame, the leper, and others, we overlook why they are beggars. They are beggars because they have been determined to be outcasts from their communities and they have no other way to make a living. The physical problem they experience is not the cause for their begging; it is the attitude of the community towards them that makes them different and outcast. We read about the miracles which Jesus performed and marvel. In reality the miracle comes from the fact that they are restored to their rightful place in the community. They are no longer outcasts. And Jesus demonstrated that they were acceptable—not after they were healed but before.

After an encounter with Jesus, they were no longer separated from the blessings of life.

You wrote these words which I think speak more meaningfully than you might have thought:

"And that is a lesson I needed to hear just then—to help me grow more sensitive to the needs of those who wait expectantly on the edges of my world."

What you and your daughter could have given this man was an invitation into your world.

There are two reasons why I have shared all this with you. First of all, the story was "a lesson I needed to hear." It made me stop and examine how easily I have kept persons that were different from being a part of my world. I thank you for that message although I'm not certain you intended to reach that deeply into the experience.

In the second place, I happen to be a blind person. Most people would consider me successful in my work as a pastor. But I have listened to stories of the outcasts many times. The pain of rejection as a friend or for a job or the right to live in a desired house or to attend a preferred school. The feeling of embarrassment and inferiority over having nothing more than a check from SSI or SSDI.

The constant reliance on others not because of necessity but because others don't think one is capable of achieving much. All of these stories share one common theme: Give me the opportunity to be myself and demonstrate my right to belong. Don't give me compassion, give me opportunity. In your case and mine, Mrs. Kidd, that means to become a part of what everyone else experiences. You and I need to reach out as much as they need to be included. Jesus expects that of us.

Sincerely,
Robert M. Eschbach, Pastor

TO WHOM DO WE TURN TO FIND POSITIVE ATTITUDES ABOUT BLINDNESS—A PARENT'S CONCERNS

by Lauren L. Eckery

(Note: Laurie Eckery is one of the leaders of the Federation in Nebraska. She has a husband (Jerry) and a daughter (Lynden). The following article appeared in the Fall, 1983, News From Blind Nebraskans, the official publication of the National Federation of the Blind of Nebraska.)

WHAT LYNDEN HAS TO HEAR

We all know where the negative attitudes come from about blindness. Take the following examples, examples which my daughter, Lynden, has to hear.

The other day we were approaching a cab on our way to preschool. As the driver opened the door and Lynden climbed in in her usual energetic manner, the driver admonished: "Hold on little lady. Aren't you going to help your mommy into the cab first?" Lynden, knowing how unnecessary that was, continued onto her side of the seat. I wondered how shocked the driver was as I stepped up rather than down into the cab, sat my bottom onto the seat rather than the floor of the cab, and even proceeded to shut the door rather than open it. I had little time to wonder, for her next question, before even inquiring about our destination, was (addressed to Lynden, of course): "I bet you take real good care of your mommy all of the time, don't you sweetie?" Though Lynden didn't comment, I'm sure she heard it.

Another time, when the weather was a little warmer, we were walking to preschool. We were standing at 50th and Chicago Streets in Omaha, where there is a school crossing light. As we approached, I noticed that there was a child patrol ready to punch the light. Several other children were hanging about, waiting for the light to change. Suddenly a mother of one of the children came up behind me and said to the children: "Don't worry, I'll take care of her." Knowing what she meant, I thought to myself, "Oh no you won't." As the light changed, I took a larger stride than usual, which caused Lynden to run, and we were off just in time to escape the mother's hand on the back of my coat. Again, Lynden did not respond, but I know she heard. One of these days, she's going to respond, and I wonder what her response will be. Will she agree with the adults around us that we are incompetent or will she see us as we are? I ask this not only of Lynden but of children of blind parents everywhere.

WHAT I WAS PRIVILEGED TO HEAR

It is said that babies know when they're hungry, that they know when they need to eat and what they should eat. I believe it is also true that babies know who to trust and who to respect. It also appears that they have, at a very early age, a very good grasp of common

sense.

When I first entered Lynden into Blossom Time Child Care, I had questions in my mind: How are those kids going to see my blindness? What will be the effect on Lynden? Carl Rogers, a proponent of humanistic phenomenology, claims that children have what he calls an organismic valuing system; that children start out quickly learning what's best for them and seeking it. This gets messed up when other people's values, standards, attitudes, et cetera are quite often forced upon children, and then begins the conflict.

Several weeks ago I had joined Lynden's group for lunch, as I always do after our music lesson. Most of the children had finished eating, but two girls in the opposite corner from me had the most interesting discussion:

A: "Her plate's almost empty, but how can she eat it?"

B: "Well, you saw, didn't you? She found it with her fork and ate it, so she can do it."

A: "I don't understand; like this morning Lynden didn't bring her in to eat. How did she get here?"

B (with some disgust): "Well, A, you saw her walk in here. I saw you watching her. She hit the table with her

cane, touched her chair, and sat down. So, she did it."

A: "But—but how can she do it if she can't see? Oh, yeah, she did it, so she can do it!"

How often do adults see exactly what we do and hear exactly what we say and still not believe it? How flimsy is "seeing is believing."

A few days ago I was in the hallway helping Lynden put on her coat. A mother and a small child were about to leave.

Mother (in hushed voice, of course): "No, let's wait. I want to see if she needs help."

Child: "Mom! Let's go! She doesn't need help."

Mother: "Okay, but I just want to make sure."

Child: "Mom, she does it all the time. She walks Lynden over here and home and helps her with her coat all the time."

I didn't say a word. With coat properly zipped, snapped, and hood tied, Lynden and I walked past them and left.

My question at this point would be: "Does Blossom Time only teach its children, or do its children teach someone else?" Who sees blind people as they are? Let's ask our children.

MORRISTOWN: COMMENTS FROM A FORMER WORKER

by Kenneth Jernigan

Readers of the Monitor are familiar with the name of Edgar Sammons. He lives in the mountains of Tennessee, and his character and spirit are as rugged and individualistic as the hills he

inhabits. From time to time Edgar writes me a letter.

He is not a world traveler, nor does he have an extensive academic education. Yet, he is an educated man. He is

articulate and possessed of wisdom—wisdom which comes from a keen mind, a caring heart, a lifetime of experience, a lack of pretention, and the ability to cut through non-essentials to reality. I have always admired Edgar Sammons and regarded him as my friend.

His occasional letters help me keep things in perspective. They remind me of my heritage and background. They prevent me, as you might say, from getting above my raising.

Edgar formerly worked at the sheltered shop in Morristown. Recently he wrote me about it:

Mountain City, Tennessee
January 10, 1984

Here I am again. Thought I would try to write you a few lines as it is raining and I can't get out.

The blind won and won big in Morristown. I was glad to hear about it in the Braille Monitor. I hope it works. I worked there over sixteen and a half years. The workers who complained are right. The sighted people do a lot of work there that the blind could do. I don't remember now, but I think the shop moved to Morristown from Johnson City in 1956. I went down there and started training in 1957. They kept me on training for a year. They done that so the state would pay for it while the shop got the benefit of my work.

After I got off of training, I got seventy-five cents a hour. When I left there, I think I was getting a dollar and a half a hour. I beat the little felt beds for the army when they got orders for them. They got a good many

orders for them the first few years that I worked there. I blowed and beat a lot of cotton mattresses. I covered springs and helped bag box springs and mattresses. They got a good many orders for mattress pads for a good while before I left there.

J.C. Austin put me to folding the pads and bagging and boxing them. I done just as much of that as the people that was getting full pay. I guess I was on that job for about two weeks. When I would catch up and get ahead, I would make a few cotton beds.

I went back to bag my pads one day, and a sighted woman said, "From now on I am bagging the beds, Edgar." I don't know whether J.C. Austin told her to do it or not. She bagged a while and turned it over to her sighted sister.

J.C. was floor boss at the time. I thought, "If he didn't tell her to take my job, why didn't he ask me why I wasn't bagging pads?" I didn't care. I wasn't getting any more pay anyway.

He might have thought that I had rather do something else. That wasn't the thing of it. The blind could do a lot more work in these shops if they had the training. They get the blind in there and get them on the welfare and just pay them a little. A blind person would have to get on the welfare with what they get paid. I went down there to work and try to get off of the welfare. They cut me down to eight dollars a month. I told them that I would have to come home if that was all I could get. They added a five dollar laundry allowance to my check. That let me make thirteen dollars a month. I was getting eighteen dollars a week on training period. I probably wouldn't have come home anyway because I didn't have any-

thing else to do, and I needed something—something to let me do useful work even if I only got starvation pay.

One of the officials, Mrs. Goodman, said when I got off training she wanted to adjust my welfare check. She adjusted it all right. She adjusted it out, and that was the last of that. They changed the law on it in a few years after Mattie Ruth and I got married. They tried to get us back on the welfare but we told them that we didn't want to. I don't think the foreman liked it.

I have been gone from there for over ten years. The one's that I knew when I was there didn't stick with the one's that did do something. I guess they was like me. I thought if we tried to do something, I might get laid off and have to go back and live off of my people. While I was out on my own I meant to keep it that way. If the National Fed-

eration of the Blind had been there at the time, it might have made a lot of difference.

Mattie Ruth and I was married twenty-one years the 19th of November. If it was to do over, we would do it again. We have had a good bit of sickness, but we managed.

I have done a many of a hard day's work in that shop in Morristown, and they know it. I didn't get a raise the last year I worked there. They had stopped making cotton beds, but there were a lot of other things I could have done if they would have let me. Well, I hope the shop does right by the blind. A lot of people that they called blind had a lot of sight. There are very few that are totally blind. They ought to teach the blind a lot of things that they don't.

PUBLIC AWARENESS CONTINUES

by Dorothy Grubb

(Note: Dorothy Grubb is a member of the Lansing, Michigan, Chapter.)

On December 1, 1983, Pat Cannon, Joy Osmar, Dan Grubb, and I traveled to Alpena, Michigan, as part of NFBM's public awareness campaign. We hosted a two-day exhibit at the Alpena Mall and had on display many low vision and Braille aids and appliances.

Our purpose for hosting this exhibit was to inform the public about the realities of blindness and also to let blind people know what is available to them.

While in Alpena we met with a state

representative and participated in two radio interviews as well as a television interview. The newspaper in the area also gave our exhibit good coverage.

All of us shared a feeling of excitement as we explained about talking books and cassettes to people who were eligible for them but never before knew they existed. Our thanks to Sue Williams, who is a librarian at the library in Alpena and who was at the mall with us helping people fill out applications for talking books. She was a great help to us in supporting our efforts and continues to work with people in the

area.

One lady who resides at a nursing home came to see us and was overjoyed when we told her how to obtain a Braille bingo board.

Some people at first asked what we were selling, and when they found out we weren't there to sell things, they asked if we would take donations, and they were surprised and moved to find out that we were there to do neither.

Our trip was a great success, but I'm sure that we all wondered at times. For instance, we rented a van, which was brand new. However, it broke down just before we arrived at the mall so we made

our grand entrance being towed by a tow truck an hour later than scheduled.

If our spirits were dampened after that incident, it certainly didn't last long. Talking with people and giving them opportunities to change their lives for the better is an unforgettable, challenging, and exhilarating experience. At the end of each day we were quite exhausted but all agreed that our time was well spent. NFBM plans to continue hosting exhibits throughout the state to help give people ideas and opportunities to change their lives forever.

NATIONAL VENDORS CONFERENCE

The National Federation of the Blind Merchants Division announces a three-day National Vendors Conference to be held March 30 through April 1, 1984, in Columbus, Ohio. The host affiliate for the conference is the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio Vendors Chapter. Meetings will be held Saturday and Sunday (March 31 and April 1) at the Christopher Inn, 300 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. Friday, March 30, will be devoted to visiting local vending facilities in the Columbus area, along with registration and hospitality.

In making room reservations at the Christopher Inn write to the above address or call 1-800-848-9398 (for toll free reservations outside of Ohio) or 1-800-282-9349 (for toll free reservations in Ohio). Room rates for this confer-

ence are singles and doubles each \$34.00. In addition to making your hotel reservations, persons planning to attend are requested to register early for the conference by notifying the Ohio Vendors Chapter at 5 East Long Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215; phone 614-221-1554. An advance registration fee of \$30.00 (including tickets for the Saturday luncheon and banquet) should be sent to the Ohio Vendors Chapter. Persons who register upon arriving at the conference will pay a registration fee of \$35.00.

The Merchants Division, with the leadership of the Ohio Vendors Chapter, is planning an outstanding conference program and invites all interested Federationists, vendors or not, to attend. Register early! See you in Columbus!

THE PHOENIX CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

BENEDICT ARNOLD SPEAKS AGAIN

Ever since the days when I commanded troops in the American Revolution, I have faithfully kept a diary. Today it is January 3, 1984, and I cannot shake off a feeling of depression. Contrary to the lies which have been spread concerning my character, I have always been loyal and trustworthy. Let those who doubt it examine the records of the expedition to Quebec and the battle at Saratoga.

In more recent years I have been a member of the inner circle of the American Council of the Blind, and I have felt alternate despair and frustration at the mistakes made by our esteemed leaders. Perhaps this is why I feel such a sense of depression, for the ACB convention will occur again in only a few months; and I am afraid we will continue the blunders which we made in Phoenix.

Everybody knows that the National Federation of the Blind (troublemakers and rabble rousers though they be) cannot be compared to us in numbers. They are many times larger than we of the American Council, and they have a way of turning every crisis to their advantage. It seems to me (as an old hand at both strategy and tactics) that we would do better to keep quiet about our own numbers and spend our energy attacking their claims. This way we present no target at which to shoot but can scoff and pretend that we do not believe that

the Federation has 50,000 members.

But, no, we can't let well enough alone. In fact, we never seem to learn. I think it was our respected National Representative Oral Miller, who said two or three years ago that the American Council of the Blind was bigger than the National Federation of the Blind—in fact, that the ACB was the only national organization of the blind which was growing and flourishing. Preposterous as this claim was and is, apparently it was irresistible to our respected but inexperienced leaders. Durward and Grant and the whole bunch of them took it up in chorus and simply could not seem to let it go. I could have told them that it would backfire, but wisdom and experience are more than a matter of mere chronology. (Some of our esteemed ACB leaders would not understand that crack either, but let it pass! Let it pass!)

The fat, as the saying goes, is now in the fire; for I have learned through my network of agents and spies that the National Federation of the Blind has probably learned the truth about the smallness of our numbers and, particularly, about the poor showing we made at our 1983 convention in Phoenix.

To none other than my diary would I confess these shameful facts. I can only hope that I am wrong and that the Federation does not have them. The embarrassment and lack of credibility

would be almost more than I could stand.

The plain truth of it is this: Last July in Phoenix we headquartered at the Hilton Hotel. Its largest room has less than 10,000 square feet. That, I blush to say, was more than ample to handle our convention sessions—and even our banquet. Of course, we try to cover our nakedness by saying that we have large numbers in attendance at our conventions but that they just don't go to meetings. However, there is a limit as to how much people can be flimflammed. Examine the figures. The Hilton can only commit 470 rooms, and we didn't fill it. In fact, we used a total of 457 rooms—250 doubles, 18 triples, 4 quads, and 185 singles. That comes to only 755 people. Only 755! Yet, we claimed that we had thirteen or fourteen hundred in attendance. Do we really think that people will believe that six or seven hundred were local to the Phoenix area and went home every night? After all, there is a limit to human credibility.

Of course, we are claiming that we used the San Carlos Hotel, and maybe that will confuse the issue a little—but not much. It won't take an expert (even a member of CIA could do it) to learn that we used about fifteen rooms at the San Carlos. I tell you our brags

and boasts have done us in.

Then, there is the disgraceful matter of our banquet. We only had 519 plates sold, and I leave it to you to determine whether even all of those really showed up. The National Federation of the Blind (holding its convention at the same time in Kansas City) had more than three times our banquet attendance. To top it all there was the embarrassment involving the American Association of Workers for the Blind. They met at the same hotel and overlapped our convention so that we could increase our numbers, but even they had a larger banquet than we did. They had 525. So here we are, claiming to be the largest organization in the blindness field, and we can't even come in second.

I confide to my diary that I am humiliated beyond expression. We should stop trying to deal in hard facts and concentrate on smear and name-calling. That is the only thing that has ever given us even a glimmer of success, and it hasn't done much. Why is it that we can't seem to win and keep the loyalty of blind people? We have had agency support and agency money, but it hasn't helped. Perhaps my entry in tomorrow's diary will be more cheerful, but not today.

FACTS FROM THE FILES

by Gerry Paice

The free mailing privilege originally for Braille and recorded books intended solely for the use of the blind was extended by the Ninetieth Congress in

1968 to include other persons whose physical impairments prevented their use of conventionally printed matter. Our Ninetieth Congress also extended the

postage-free privilege to tools and devices especially made or adapted for use by the blind or physically impaired and further provided that such persons may send Braille, large print, and recorded correspondence through the mails without charge.

Throughout the years blind Californians have distinguished themselves in their chosen professions. Prominent among Federationists, of course, were Doctors Newel Perry and Jacobus tenBroek who made outstanding contributions as teachers and humanitarians. Others who have made strides in the law and in politics are Herbert W. Slater, who served in the California Senate from 1915 to 1947 and Assemblyman Ernest C. Crowley, who represented his California district from 1930 to 1952.

The chief credit for initiating and demonstrating radio reading services for the blind is due Stanley Potter, head of programs for the blind in Minnesota. It was in Minnesota that the first program of this type was broadcast. Despite various insinuations in public appeal brochures and other literature, no national agency serving the blind played the slightest role in this innovation.

The second radio reading service (and the first to be on a regular FM station as opposed to a subcarrier channel) was established by the Iowa Commission for the Blind in 1961.

In the fall of 1953 our Federal Civil Service Commission finally permitted qualified blind applicants to compete in one of its examinations. It was the beginning of the Commission's recognition of competence among qualified blind individuals after many years of Federation persistence in the courts. Our present concern is the infrequency of

promotions for those meriting them, but this, too, will be rectified in time.

In 1975 the Washington State Legislature passed a bill which, for the first time in history, guaranteed that a clerk of court cannot deny a person the right and responsibility to serve on jury panels solely because of blindness to any degree. This particular bill is one of the best, if not the best, law of its type in the nation.

Jacobus tenBroek received his Doctorate in Jurisprudence from the University of California in 1940. He then completed a year as a Brandeis Research Fellow at Harvard Law School and was appointed to the faculty of the University of Chicago Law School. Two years later he began his teaching career at the University of California, assuming the chairmanship of the Department of Speech in 1955. He published four books: Prejudice, War, and the Constitution, California's Dual System of Family Law, Hope Deferred: Public Welfare and the Blind, and The Antislavery Origins of the Fourteenth Amendment—revised and republished as Equal Under Law. These books dealt with the fields of welfare, government, and law, giving Dr. tenBroek the reputation as one of the nation's foremost scholars on matters of constitutional law.

The United States Supreme Court handed down its first opinion dealing with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act on June 11, 1979. The case involved Southeastern Community College and pertained to the application of a deaf woman desiring to enter its nursing school. The name of the case was Southeastern Community College vs. Davis.

During the middle part of the present century Donald H. Wilkinson, totally

blind, served for nearly thirty-five years as a judge in the State of California.

Senator Jennings Randolph received the Francis Joseph Campbell Award in 1974 at the American Library Association convention. He was honored not only for his support of library services for the blind but for his broad efforts in the field.

Ralph Sanders, NFB board member and President of Blind Industries and Services of Maryland, received his Bachelor's Degree from California State University and his Master's in Journalism from Columbia University in New York. His experience in the field of public relations includes partnership in a public relations firm in his home state of Arkansas and Director of Campaign Press Relations in the gubernatorial

campaign of former Arkansas Governor Winthrop Rockefeller.

The uniform system of Braille known as Standard English Braille was established for all English speaking countries in 1932.

The Pratt-Smoot bill was signed into law by President Hoover on March 3, 1931. One hundred thousand dollars was appropriated for fiscal year 1932 to provide books for the blind. Eighteen libraries plus the Library of Congress were selected to act as regional distributing centers. This legislation was amended in 1966 to include the physically handicapped with problems in reading available books. The first Braille book made available under the Pratt-Smoot Act was Woodrow Wilson's George Wilson.

NEVADA CONVENTION

by Audrey Tait

The annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Nevada was held at the Fremont Hotel in Las Vegas, November 4th through 6th, 1983.

Nearly one hundred people heard Dr. Jernigan give a moving review of the trials and tribulations of the Nevada State Services to the Blind, with which he has been intimately associated. He concluded with a pledge to assist Nevada in rebuilding its program.

Various state and federal officials updated their services to blinded persons, with ample periods for questions.

In response to a resolution criticizing the Rehabilitation Division for its tokenism in employing blind persons within the agency, the Director, Mr. Delbert Frost, advised that he had searched throughout the country and could not find any qualified blind persons for job openings as teachers/counselors.

I would appreciate interested persons letting me know of their availability, and I will be happy to relay the information to Mr. Frost. They can also contact the State Personnel Department

in Carson City.

The following officers were elected:
Audrey Tait, President; John Tait, First
Vice President; Joshua Newman, Second
Vice President; Joan Abraham, Secretary;

James Waggoner, Treasurer; Garnett Koro-
wicki, Chaplain; and Board Members:
Ella Council, Mary Guy, Carl Clontz, and
Diane Brown.

RECIPES

RASPBERRY ICE CREAM DESSERT

by Karen Mayry

Ingredients: 1 pkg. 10 oz. frozen raspberries
1 pkg. 3 oz. jello, raspberry
1 quart ice cream, vanilla

Directions: Dissolve the package of jello in the raspberries which have
been heated and then cool before stirring in the ice cream,
until dissolved. Freeze until served. Real easy—we like it.

CRANBERRY MOLD

by Karen Mayry

Ingredients: 2 cups cranberries, heaping
½ cup molasses
1/3 cup warm water
1 egg
1-1/3 cup flour
2 tsp. soda
1 tsp. baking powder

Directions: Beat egg. Add molasses, water, and flour, sifted with soda
and baking powder. Fold in berries. Put in buttered can or
mold and steam for two hours. Serve warm with the
following sauce:

Mix:
½ cup cream
½ cup butter
1 cup white sugar

Let come to a boil. Serve hot on thin slices of cranberry
mold.

VEGETABLE DIP

by Lawrence Kettner

(Note: The name of Lawrence Kettner, who is a Federationist from Minnesota, is quite familiar to members of our movement. His experiences with the Minneapolis Society for the Blind were reported in the Braille Monitor for September, 1974.)

Ingredients: 1 pint mayonnaise
2 - 8 oz. containers sour cream
1 can chopped bean sprouts
1 pkg. chopped spinach - drained
1 pkg. Knor vegetable soup mix
1 pkg. onion soup mix
dill weed to taste (optional)

HOT DIP

by Lawrence Kettner

Ingredients: 2 pounds velveeta cheese
1 pound hamburger—browned and drained
1 hot banana pepper chopped or jalapeno pepper
1 can tomato soup

Directions: Heat above ingredients in crock pot.

MONITOR MINIATURES ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇ ◇

◇From Karen Mayry, President of the NFB of South Dakota:

The Governor of South Dakota and Mayors of six cities in South Dakota proclaimed October 15, 1983, National Federation of the Blind White Cane Safety Day. The cities are: Rapid City, Aberdeen, Mobridge, Lead, Sioux Falls, and Deadwood.

◇Braille Production Unit:

We have been asked to carry the following announcement:

With an eye to the future, The Prose and Cons Braille Unit of the Nebraska State Penitentiary has just moved into a work space eight times larger than previously occupied. With the move the unit expanded to a full-time twenty-two man unit, not counting volunteers. We are now able to deal directly with private persons needing to establish an account with us for finished products and Braille writer repair. Brochures describing its services and prices can be ordered directly from the unit in print or Braille either singly or in bulk orders. The address is: Prose and Cons Braille Unit, P.O. Box 2500, Lincoln, Nebraska 68502.

◇St. Louis Chapter:

The following are the officers for the St. Louis Chapter for 1984: John Ford, President; John Dower, Vice President; Corina Bryan, Secretary; Betty VonSee-len, Treasurer; Mary Wurtzel, Corresponding Secretary; and Daryl Castner, Member at Large.

◇Colorado Springs Student Chapter Acts:
Michael Swanson, President of the

Student Chapter of Colorado Springs, reports on recent actions taken by the group to combat discrimination against the blind by many of the nation's airlines. On December 13, 1983, the Colorado Springs group sent a letter to Continental Airlines protesting its treatment of the blind—and, particularly, its behavior toward Diane McGeorge early in 1983. Three days later a press release dealing with the same subject matter was widely distributed throughout the nation. The press release said in part:

"Hundreds of blind persons who are members of the National Federation of the Blind will soon be converging on Washington, D.C. in the 1984 National Federation of the Blind March on Washington. A large number of these persons, flying to the nation's capital to meet with legislators concerning legislative issues facing the blind, will not be flying on Continental Airlines."

◇Announcement from Future Reflections:

An increasing number of Federationists have been inquiring about how they can get either a taped, recorded, or Brailled subscription to Future Reflections, the NFB magazine for parents of blind children. Future Reflections is not available on disc or in Braille, but you can get it on tape. To get your taped subscription started, you need to send your request and a C-90 cassette tape or \$2.00 to: Susan Ford, 3241 Walter Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63143. The tape is re-used each issue, so it must be returned after it has been read in order for you to get your next issue. If you have any requests regarding back issues on tape, or have any other questions about the tape subscrip-

tion process, those should be addressed to Susan Ford. All other inquiries, comments, questions, suggestions, articles, et cetera, about Future Reflections should be directed to me, Barbara Cheadle, Editor, Future Reflections, P.O. Box 1947, Boise, Idaho 83701.

◇From the Palmetto Blind, the publication of the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina:

How To Tell A Winner From A Loser:

A winner says, "Let's find out"; a Loser says, "Nobody knows."

When a winner makes a mistake, he says, "I was wrong"; when a loser makes a mistake, he says, "It wasn't my fault."

A winner credits his "good luck" for winning—even though it isn't good luck; a loser blames his "bad luck" for losing—even though it isn't bad luck.

A winner knows how and when to say "Yes" and "No"; a loser says, "Yes, but" and "perhaps not" at the wrong times, for the wrong reasons.

A winner isn't nearly as afraid of losing as a loser is secretly afraid of winning.

A winner works harder than a loser and has more time; a loser is always "too busy" to do what is necessary.

A winner goes through a problem; a loser goes around it, and never gets past it.

A winner makes commitments; a loser makes promises.

A winner shows he's sorry by making up for it. A loser says, "I'm sorry," but does the same thing the next time.

A winner knows what to fight for and what to compromise on; a loser compromises on what he shouldn't and fights for what isn't worthwhile fighting for.

◇NFB of Mahoning Valley Takes the Lead in Transportation Problems:

The Youngstown (Ohio) Indicator for November 30, 1983, says:

"A committee has been formed to help the Western Reserve Transit Authority improve services to the handicapped.

"Scott Sussman, executive director of the Western Reserve Transit Authority, and Thomas Anderson, president of the Mahoning Valley Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind announced the committee's formation Monday.

"Sussman said the WRTA and seven area handicapped organizations would meet periodically to see if the company's handicapped service can be improved."

◇Absolute Preference:

Deanna Morss, a Federation leader from Wyoming, sends us the following article from the Casper Star-Tribune of December 12, 1983:

Montana Debates Old Law Favoring Veterans, Disabled

Helena, Montana. The legislature opens a special session Monday to consider repealing Montana's unique law giving preference to veterans, their spouses and the handicapped for jobs in state and local government.

The 1921 law gives veterans, their spouses, even dependents of disabled veterans, as well as physically and mentally disabled civilians, absolute preference in hiring for state and local government jobs.

Unnoticed during nearly all of its existence, the law provoked a storm last summer when it was resurrected by a legally blind woman whose attorney won a state Supreme Court decision declaring

the "absolute" provision means just that: veterans and the handicapped move to the front of the hiring line for government jobs.

◇Steve Benson Injured:

The December, 1983, newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois reports as follows:

On Monday, November 2, while leaving his work place, President Benson was struck by an automobile. Benson sustained a hairline fracture of the small bone in his lower right leg. To our knowledge, no other injuries have manifested themselves and Benson is well on his way to recovery. He plans to return to work November 21.

◇Avery Appointed:

On November 28, 1983, Chester Avery began his duties as Director of the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired in the Rehabilitation Services Administration, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education. Mr. Avery, who is blind, is a native of the state of Maine. The bulk of his work experience has been in one position or another with the federal government. He joined the staff of the Office of Education in 1964.

◇Dies:

The following letter has been received from Charles Brown, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia:

"I am saddened to have to report to you the untimely death of Mrs. Nancy Hoover on December 29, 1983. As you know, Mrs. Hoover was for many years the Recording Secretary of the National

Federation of the Blind of Virginia and leader of our Skyline Chapter in Harrisburg. She attended numerous national conventions. Mrs. Hoover will be sorely missed."

◇Real Buddies:

It happened last fall in Daytona Beach at the NAC meeting. It was a small event—yet, one of real significance. It shows how widely the Braille Monitor is read, how much influence it has, and what dissension there is in the NAC ranks. It also points up the fact that the NACsters, far from supporting one of their own when he is down, kick him and ridicule him—which, perhaps, also explains why NAC cannot win and keep support. And what was this trivial but significant event? Adam Bishop, a Federationist from Indianapolis, tells us in a recent article: "An interesting comment was overheard in the dining room of the NAC hotel. It related to Dr. Bleecker's saying he wanted to play in another sandbox as reported in the Braille Monitor. It seems that Don Wedewer (who is head of State Services for the Blind in Florida, is blind himself, and is a prominent NACster) was told by a sighted companion who was looking out the window that someone's dog guide had just relieved itself on the beach. Mr. Wedewer remarked that if Dr. Bleecker wanted to play in a sandbox, he had better not use that one." Some of the Federationists present said that he already had.

◇Dies:

Georgia Myers, Acting Secretary of the Greater Cumberland Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland, writes: "I regret to inform you

of the recent death of Ruth Twigg. Ruth had been part of the movement since 1973. On the national level she helped on the tenBroek Elegant Elephant table for four years. She also sold scissors in the exhibit room and helped the NFB of Maryland where she was needed. At the time of her death (December 26, 1983) Ruth was serving her eleventh year as Secretary of the Greater Cumberland Chapter."

◇New Job:

On January 3, 1984, Steve Benson (President of the NFB of Illinois and a member of the board of Directors of the National Federation of the Blind) became the Assistant to the Director of the Catholic Guild for the Blind of Chicago. "I see this new position as a tremendous opportunity," Benson said. For almost fifteen years Benson had worked as a rehabilitation teacher at the Blind Rehabilitation Center, Hines V.A. Hospital.

◇Request for Newsletters:

Fred Wurtzel, 7700 Folk Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63143, is now editing The Blind Missourian, the official publication of the Missouri affiliate. He requests that other affiliates and chapters put him on the mailing list to receive their publications. We are sure he will be happy to reciprocate.

◇Elected:

The new officers of the Cedar Rapids Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Iowa are: Delores Reisinger, President; David Meyer, Vice President; Mary Sonksen, Secretary; Jack Reisinger, Treasurer; and Debbie Knapp and Joyce Meyer, Board Members.

◇Article and Correspondence Requested:

Carol Siegel, 6839 Parsons Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21207, has asked us to carry the following announcement:

"I would appreciate receiving a Braille copy of an article which appeared in the Reader's Digest (I'm not sure which issue) entitled: "The Odyssey of Charles Wayo," by Charles L. Sanders. It is about a Ghanian boy. I know that the article started on page 40 in Braille.

"I'd also be interested in hearing from anyone via Braille and/or cassette who shares my interests in law, politics, non-fiction reading and writing, all fields of science, arts and crafts of all kinds, and my interest in the countries of Central, East, and West Africa."

◇New Officers:

Billie Weaver, President of the Missouri affiliate, writes:

The new Springfield officers are: Melody Wartenbee, President; Dorothy Rittershouse, Vice President; Richard Morris, Secretary; Lawson Weaver, Treasurer; Joan Davis, Board Member; and Bob Mickle, Board Member.

◇Installation of Officers:

Betty Kendall writes as follows:

"On Friday, December 2, 1983, Mutual Federation of the Blind of Cleveland, Ohio, had their fourth annual catered buffet dinner, at which time our state president, Reverend Robert Eschbach, installed the officers for 1984. They are as follows: Annette Anderson, President; Andrew Warren, Vice President; Betty Kendall, Secretary; and John Knall, Treasurer. The newly elected Board Members are Leo Carver, Elizabeth

(Sunny) Gilmore, Bill Gilmore, and Leonard Schultz. The two Board Members whose terms had not expired were also included in the ceremony, and they are Sue Franklin and Ethel Card. Margaret Knall will be our representative at NFB Ohio convention in Canton next October; Leonard Schultz alternate."

◇Newsletter:

The National Federation of the Blind of Delaware has now established an official newsletter. It is called Voice of Delaware, and its Editor is Roberta Jensen, Towne Court Apartments, 161-1 Thorn Lane, Newark, Delaware 19711.

◇American Bar Association Journal Available:

The National Association of Blind Lawyers, a division of the National Federation of the Blind, announces that it now has available on cassette copies of the American Bar Association Journal. Copies are available beginning with the November, 1983, issue. Those who are not members of the National Association of Blind Lawyers will need to help defray costs of production of the Journal by sending in advance \$30.00 for a year's subscription. Those who are members of the National Association of Blind Lawyers should simply indicate that they wish to receive the Journal. It will be sent to them without cost in consideration of their membership in the organization. Dues for the National Association of Blind Lawyers are \$5.00 per year. To join the National Association of Blind Lawyers or for further information contact: Marc Maurer, President, National Association of Blind Lawyers, Maurer Law Firm, Suite 100, Court Square Building, 200 East Lexing-

ton Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202; phone 301-539-2411. To subscribe to the cassette edition of the American Bar Association Journal or for further information about the Journal contact: Sharon Gold, Publications Manager, National Association of Blind Lawyers, 5982 South Land Park Drive, Sacramento, California 95822; phone 916-424-2226. Checks for subscriptions to the Journal or to cover membership in the National Association of Blind Lawyers should be made payable to National Association of Blind Lawyers and sent to the Maurer Law Firm.

◇Accident:

Jim Bowen, a long-time leader of the Federation in Florida, was hit by a car while crossing the street on his way to work January 11. The accident was serious enough that he had to spend several days in St. Vincent's Hospital in Jacksonville. From all reports there are not likely to be permanent injuries, but it was a close call. Both Jim and Beth Bowen are much loved and widely respected throughout the Federation, and we wish Jim a quick and thorough recovery.

◇NAC Picks New Director:

NAC has now selected its new Executive Director to replace Dick Bleecker. He is Dennis L. Hartenstine, who has served for the past eleven years as Executive Director of the Retinitis Pigmentosa Foundation in Baltimore. When a Monitor reporter contacted Mr. Hartenstine at his office he said that he did not wish to be interviewed until after March 11. He said that he would be on the job at NAC in New York at that time and that he would be glad to answer any questions put to him. Since news of the appoint-

ment reaches us as we are going to press and since Mr. Hartenstine refuses to be interviewed until after March 11, we shall make no further comments concerning his appointment at this time but shall plan a full article in a later issue.

◇Dies:

On Sunday, January 15, 1984, George Russell died suddenly from a heart attack. He had been at the Dallas Chapter meeting only the day before and was as excited as ever about working in the movement. Federationists will remember that George was the winner of the first Associates contest. He saw the Associates program as a way to educate the sighted public about our work and to raise money for the movement. On one Saturday afternoon George recruited

eighteen Associates in sixty minutes. That's what can happen when one person sees a need and accepts the challenge. George Russell will be missed by all who knew him, and the Federation will be diminished by his passing. It is spirit like his that makes the Federation the powerful force for good which it is in all of our lives.

◇New Officers:

The 1984 officers for the Queen City (Charlotte) Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of North Carolina are: Ken Batchelder, President; Belveia Benzenhafer, Vice President; Gary Pettengill, Secretary; and Neil Speidel, Treasurer. Also, Ruth Harmon has been elected as a new member of the Board of Directors.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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